

**WGFD Mule Deer Workshop  
April 24, 2014  
Breakout Group Notes**

**Mule Deer Workshop Summary of Main Points for all Groups:**

- **More family opportunity (youth)**
- **See quality habitat**
- **Fewer hunters & ATVs**
- **See more quality & quantity**
- **Ethics (enforcement presence in field)**

**Group 1**

**Top 3 Concerns:**

- Seeing numerous, healthy deer
  - Predator management-Indirect to experience
  - Reduced access lowers experience (lack of access on public land; maintain public access on public lands)
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- Reasonable expectation for “nice” deer (~3 point)
  - Seeing numerous, healthy deer
  - Hunting quality habitat
  - Hunting where range conditions are decent quality
  - Changes in habitat conditions over time- hunt in the same areas over years
  - Enjoy the country
  - Enjoy seeing animals- healthy populations- multiple species
  - Balance multiple use
  - Wildlife throughout year- all wildlife (predators included)-balance
  - Having quality experience
  - Getting out of house
  - Predator management
  - Too many predator sightings distracts from hunt experience
  - Having ability to manage predators (by hunters)
  - Hunting coyotes while deer hunting is fringe benefit
  - Increase predators leads to decrease mule deer (especially mountain lions)
  - Low deer numbers equal poor hunt experience
  - The only thing I can do to benefit deer is not hunt deer, self imposed limited quota
  - Reduced access; maintain public access

**Group 2**

**Top 3 Concerns:**

- Less ATV traffic (fewer road hunters)
  - Acceptable to sacrifice some opportunity to see high quality deer
  - Ability to hunt different parts of state at different times in fall
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- Lower hunter densities
  - Less ATV traffic
  - Fewer road hunters

- Opportunity to kill a deer for meat
- Seeing deer legal to harvest
- Acceptable to sacrifice some opportunity to see high quality of deer
- High quality deer (26", mature 4 point)
- No access fees to hunt (public land with animals on public land)
- Ability to park, wander/ hike while hunting
- Ability to hunt different parts of state at different times in fall
- Very few deer and lots of people/vehicles = bad hunt

### Group 3

#### Top 3 Concerns:

- Less crowded environment
  - More hunting days in the season within SWR and Sweetwater herds
  - Greater chance to see mature bucks
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- Opportunity to see deer, chance to see nice buck in the season
  - Not see 50 other hunters while I'm out there
  - Like to see "legal" deer
  - Like to hunt every year
  - More time available in a season
  - More access to areas to hunt
  - Like to go deer hunting, don't want it to disappear
  - Don't have to go every year, but want to see deer when I go
  - I want a quality hunt (limited hunters, more season length, out in nature, no abuse from ATVs)
  - To see more antlered deer
  - To see more ethical "hunters" not more killers (poachers)
  - To see less feral horses

### Group 4

#### Top 3 Concerns:

- At least be able to see mature bucks in the field (3+ old bucks)
  - To engage youth provide hunting opportunity every year (giving them good experience-not rushed-not crowded-education ethics-opportunity-family)
  - Nice just seeing more deer, all deer (bucks and does)
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- Lengthen seasons to spread hunters out. Instead of packing all hunters into 5 days- spread it out over a length of time
  - Promote ethical hunting/hunters which will help open access with landowners (education)
  - The experience is what matters. Placing a monetary value on this animal decreases the pleasure of the opportunity
  - Every year hunting applies to everyone, including youth
  - Being able to find mule deer on public land in good numbers
  - Gear certain hunter management areas toward certain groups to help landowners provide opportunity without a free for all
  - Lots of hunters taking unethical shots takes away from a quality experience
  - Educate hunters on how to hunt mule deer

- Wyoming has good access compared to many places. Maintain that and keep working with landowners
- Mule deer cover a lot of country- hunters do not. Maintain open country
- Roads- way more than there used to be- more people covering more country. Shutting down roads?

## Group 5

### Top 3 Concerns:

- Fewer hunters on ATVs
  - Seeing quality habitat supporting more deer
  - Improved ethics and courtesy (G&F presence)
- Not too many hunters
  - Vehicle restrictions- see fewer ATVs/ vehicles
  - See animals- all animals, don't have to harvest "balance"
  - Keep things wild, natural habitat
  - Like to hunt every year if the population can support it
  - Ethical behavior/ other hunters
  - More WGFD presence in the field (improve ethics)
  - Proper pack handling of animals
  - Seeing many deer
  - Scenery (good habitat)
  - Not running into livestock
  - Obeying travel laws
  - Slower deer
  - Less litter & garbage
  - Getting meat

## Group 6

### Top 3 Concerns:

- Opportunities for family experience
  - Increase understanding of mule deer ecology and habitat (increase habitat)
  - Increase hunter experience via less high densities of simultaneous hunters (better management of people)
- Too many simultaneous hunters
  - Effective control of ATV use
  - Increase deer population and better distribution (e.g. less high density concentration)
  - Increase habitat quality and less fragmentation escape cover to hold deer on mountain
  - Opportunity to harvest any deer every year
  - A lot of mature bucks in the field
  - Natural habitat environment (all wildlife, keep on public land, calm animals, not just trying to get away)
  - See more mule deer than white tail deer- at least a balance
  - Increase access to WTD/ late season

- Better understanding of mule deer (migration, disease, seasonal habitat selection, predation)
- Do not want to see wolves
- Like to see youth support in the field. Less competition with youth hunters
- Family, family, family
- Improved understanding of hunter self-policing

## **Group 7**

### **Top 3 Concerns:**

- Lower hunter density
  - More opportunity for youth
  - Seeing lots of diverse wildlife healthy habitat
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- Lower hunter density
  - Reasonable chance at trophy deer
  - Good chance for mature buck with opportunity for trophy
  - Be able to hunt without seeing excessive numbers of ATVs
  - Spread hunters out over a longer season
  - Have an opportunity to harvest dry does
  - Determine what younger generation expects and then provide it for them
  - Provide quality hunting experience for youth (preferential treatment for youth)
  - Ready access to public and private land
  - Hunt in quality habitat
  - Seeing lots of wildlife and few people

## **Group 8**

### **Top 3 Concerns:**

- Diverse opportunity
  - Multiple species seen with healthy populations so interspecific competition doesn't adversely impact certain species (quality not defined by quantity)
  - Quality habitat conditions
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- Quality of deer (not just bucks)
  - Quantity of deer
  - Not seeing other/any human impacts (i.e. solitude in nature)
  - Less hunters/ less crowding
  - Localized/ concentrated hunter crowding is an issue
  - Other hunters respecting private property rights
  - Multiple species seen with healthy populations so interspecific competition doesn't adversely impact certain species (quality not defined by quantity)
  - More big bucks
  - Antler point restrictions produce bigger bucks
  - Being in quality habitat conditions
  - Harvesting mature deer without antler point restrictions (5+ years)
  - Ability to harvest young deer (tender meat desired)
  - Ability to harvest does (meat hunting vs. trophy hunting)

- Vehicles kept on roads & not ridgelines (respect laws in place)
- Success of harvest
- WGFD presence in field
- Expectation of stakeholder participation in management decisions
- Value stakeholder input
- Access to hunt (not just on private land)
- Ability to bow and rifle hunt
- Diverse opportunity